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UNCLAS WELLINGTON 000225

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SUBJECT: NEW ZEALAND: RESPONSE ON CHILD MARRIAGE FOR NZ,  
NIUE, TOKELAU AND COOK ISLANDS

REF: STATE 36341

1. The following are responses to the request for information on child marriage in New Zealand, the Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau, keyed to the questions in paragraph 7 of reftel.

A. The legal age of marriage in New Zealand is 16. Children (both male and female) can marry at age 16 if they have not been previously married, and have obtained written parental consent. The legal age of marriage without parental consent is 20 years. In the Cook Islands, the legal age of marriage without parental consent is 20 for both males and females. With parental consent, the ages are 18 for males and 15 for females. In Tokelau, the legal age of marriage without parental consent is 21 for males and 19 for females. With parental consent, the ages are 18 for males, and 16 for females. In Niue, the legal age of marriage without parental consent is 21 for males and 19 for females. With parental consent, the ages are 18 for males and 15 for females.

B. Underage marriage is not permissible under New Zealand law, and is not a significant problem. There is no readily available information concerning the practice of under-age marriage in the Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau. Indications, however, are that there are not significant problems.

C. There are no U.S.-funded initiatives in the above-listed countries that address child marriage.  
Burnett